

**CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:**  
**NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018**

President Graham Harker opened the meeting at 19.30 hours and welcomed the 17 members present. He invited **Marcus Sherwood-Jenkins** to present his display on **Serbia**.

Serbia is an ancient kingdom in the Balkans which was Ottoman from 1840 – 1870. During the early part of this period letters was carried on horseback and the mail had no postal markings, postal charges being recorded in notebooks. Literacy was not widespread so letters were mainly official or business communications. The first stamps to appear were newspaper stamps in 1866 and examples were shown of used and unused including bisects. Straightforward postage stamps followed shortly after with examples of large blocks issued from 1867 onwards. A tremendous variety of material was shown including varieties, paper flaws, perforations, misperfs. . The 1880 Milan issue, 1890 King Alexander and 1904 change of dynasty were all well represented along with forgeries.

The first half of the evening concluded with some postal history and unusual combinations were shown on cover. In World War 1 the Austrians and Germans invaded the north of Serbia whilst the Bulgarians invaded the south.

During the second half of the evening more postal history was on show with the Serbian troops being taken into exile by the British, French and Italian fleets from the Adriatic coast. 317,000 Serbian refugees passed through Corfu in 1916.

The troops fought with the allies in Salonica and elsewhere and many ended up as Prisoners of War as evidenced by Red Cross mail sent by some of them. A number of telegrams were also displayed. Serbian schools for the children were set up in Britain, France and the USA.

British, mainly Scottish, nurses served with the Serbian troops and in 2015 Serbia issued a Souvenir Sheet commemorating 6 of these ladies, one of whom was awarded the MC.

This was an excellent display showing the turbulent events in Serbia from 1840 to modern times, covering the Ottoman period, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when it was part of Yugoslavia and time under the Germans then the Russians. So much history of the area was brought to life by Marcus and much work and research had gone into this outstanding collection.

President Graham Harker gave the vote of thanks for such a magnificent display and presented Marcus Sherwood-Jenkins with a Certificate and a bottle of wine. Members then enjoyed viewing the material. The meeting closed at 21.30 hours.

Jgh

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